

REMARKS

BY

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AT THE CIA

SENIOR INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

PROMOTION

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DCI REMARKS, SIS PROMOTION CEREMONY, JULY 20, 1987

I welcome the family members of all who are being honored here this afternoon. I know from many years of experience how much you have contributed, how much you have sacrificed, and how much you have been a part of our team. I thank you for all that you have done. I know the men and women who are being honored this afternoon will be thinking of you when they receive their awards.

I'd also like to express my appreciation to Deputy Director Gates for the many months of strong leadership that he provided as Acting Director.

Twice a year the Central Intelligence Agency holds promotion ceremonies for the Senior Intelligence Service. Those we honor are not only the leaders of the Central Intelligence Agency, they are also the role models for the many thousands of employees who serve their country through the CIA. The role we play in our national security is vital and diverse, with more sweep to it than that of most of the agencies in our government.

We play an important role in developing the information that shapes American foreign policy. Our covert actions in support of US policy are indispensable to a nation with worldwide obligations as the leader of the free world. We have accepted responsibilities in countering the terrorism that has been much in the headlines the past few years. I do not see any signs that this responsibility will diminish in the foreseeable future.

We have joined with other government agencies to deal with the problem of worldwide narcotics trafficking. We have undertaken to reduce the threat of technology transfer and all the risks that implies. Our unseen soldiers of democracy, who are holding the line in support of anticommunist insurgencies around the world, are rendering heroic service to our country.

As we approach arms control negotiations and the prospect of treaties, our ability to determine the level of verification will be a major factor in advising the President on how far we can go. Our ability to judge the military intentions and capabilities of our adversaries is the front line in our defense effort to preserve and protect our free society.

When I was sworn in on May 26, I had the pleasure of participating with Bob Gates and the President in the decoration of four covert heros. We honor them, but I pay my respects to all of you who, by your leadership, make the system work.

Much of what we do is secret. Because of this, the public is sometimes concerned, occasionally critical, and often confused about our work. In the current period of tension, several committees are investigating the activities of the Iran-contra situation. That includes what role, if any, the CIA played in it.

I've heard a lot of speculation regarding what we are going to do about it here. I've made my position clear in response to some erroneous news reports that I intend to do what is logical. That is to look at the facts as they become available. We'll review what various investigative agencies, including our own Inspector General, say about our conduct. If mistakes were made, they will be corrected. If mistakes were not made, we'll make certain the proper people know that we were doing the right thing.

I'll probably bring someone on board to help me assess the information that is already available. This will not be a new and separate investigation. I simply want to ensure that the job is done correctly while I address myself to the responsibilities that have been given to me by the President.

In the meantime, your role as leaders and managers is to do your work with absolute fidelity to the Constitution and the laws and the rules that are put in place to protect us as well as our society. Many things we have to do as part of our responsibilities require deception, but that does not include deception of those who have a right to know what we are doing.

These two things--fidelity to law and absolute veracity in dealing with those in government to whom we are responsible--provide that element of trust without which this agency can not function. Without this trust, we certainly would be subjected to the most severe kinds of restraint and unable to do the job that the American people expect of us.

I ask that all of you who are being honored today demand of those above you the veracity and the fidelity to law that I have spoken of, and that you impart the same to all who work for you.

Our nation needs our service. You who are being promoted today are the leaders of CIA who will be here long after I have passed the scene. You play a major role in ensuring that this agency can continue to meet a steadily growing diversity of demands and requirements, that it can sustain the ethics and integrity of our profession, and that it can motivate and retain the people that perform our mission.

You will have to continue to attract into this agency the finest and most inquiring minds, dedicated men and women who consider service in this crucial work more important than fame or wealth and worthy of their highest aspirations for a better and a safer world.